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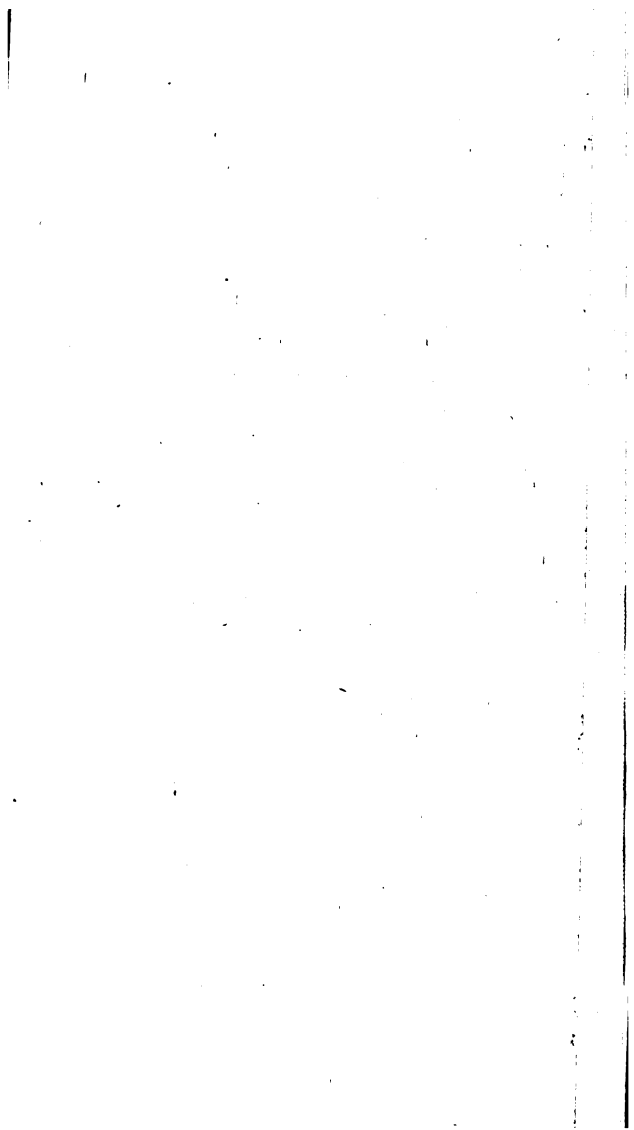


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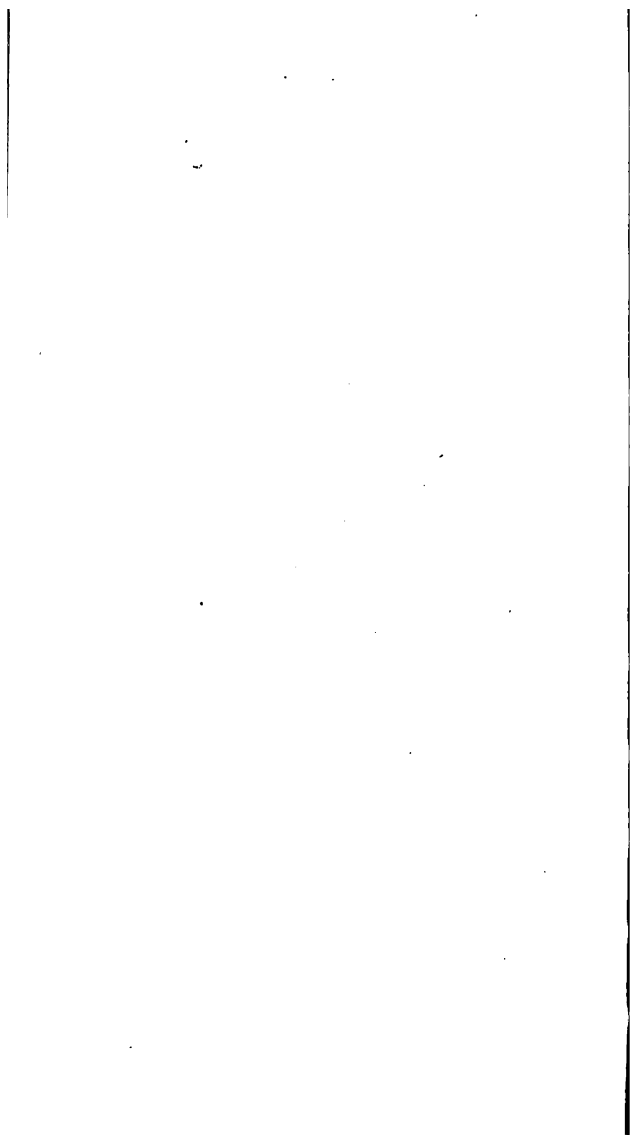


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*Presented to Mr Lennox
by A J Nicholson
Kirkcudbright*
T E S T I M O N Y

TO THE FREE GRACE OF GOD.

BY THE REV. JAMES MONTEITH,

MINISTER OF BORGUE,

FROM 1693 TO 1741 ;

NOW PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME.

WITH AN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION

AM I A CHRISTIAN ?

DEDICATED

TO THE ENQUIRERS OF HIS FLOCK,

BY THE REV. SAMUEL SMITH,

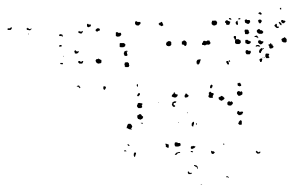
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INTRODUCTION.

THE following observations are written with a view to encourage professing Christians, to try *the reality of their interest in Christ*. In the prosecution of this aim, their author proposes to offer,—in the first place, *a few remarks on the importance of the subject, and on the prevailing inattention to its claims, on the part of the community in general*: to shew, in the second place, *that the Scriptures authorise and encourage us to try our spiritual state, and furnish us with ample means of knowing whether or not we are Christians*: and, in the third place, *to point out some of the advantages which may be anticipated by those who will institute by the light of revelation, a close and impartial scrutiny of their characters*. It is his humble prayer, that the Spirit of truth may guide the writer to the faithful exposition of the subject, and the reader to the profitable improvement of it.

I. It is encouraging to the heart of a faithful and conscientious minister, when he learns that any amongst the members of his flock are awakened to a concern about their souls.

No one of his hearers is more interesting in his eyes, than he who is enquiring with evident sincerity and earnestness of mind, *am I a Christian*? Do I bear the marks of a true believer and genuine disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ? May I regard myself as delivered from the yoke of Satan,

and brought under the yoke of Jesus,—a partaker of the freedom *with which he maketh his people free* ? One great object which we have in view in the preaching of the gospel is to provoke this enquiry ; and then have we some ground to hope that our preaching has not been in vain, when we witness in our hearers a sense of the infinite value of their souls, and the necessity for settling without delay, the momentous question, whether or not the imperishable spirit within, is in a state of death or of life,—*dead in trespasses and sin*, or through the power of regenerating grace, *made alive unto God*. Much cause of anxiety on our part still remains. The most difficult and responsible part of our office hath yet to be discharged, when we go on to deal with the *awakened sinner* ; to guide his enquiries ; to watch over him, lest he relapse into apathy once more, and the light which began to dawn, again be extinguished ; and to warn him against rash confidences, fanatical delusions, or causeless despondency. But though all this may await us, and the prospect of it may occasion anxious thoughts to spring up in the breast ; we cannot but rejoice to know that our hearers are responding to the call which from time to time we address to their souls, and are willing to have the question determined whether or not they have any good and scriptural

grounds for concluding that they know Christ, and have a saving interest in his redemption.

Have not all professing Christians, it may be asked by some, made it their business to settle the question whether or not they are in reality Christians? May it not be affirmed, of at least the great majority of our friends and neighbours, in a land like this, where all are baptised into the name of Christ, and have been instructed from early youth out of the pure oracles of God; that they have sought with all sincerity and good faith to know how far they bear the marks of Christ's genuine disciples? We are constrained to reply, *indisputably not*.

The *greater number* of professing christians, it is our persuasion, live, and not only live, but *die*, without instituting seriously this examination, or coming to any distinct, intelligent, and satisfactory conclusion, with regard to the subject of it.

Of these, *one part* find it satisfactory to entertain the notion, that it is a very simple and easy thing to be a true christian; requiring only a moderate share of moral propriety of conduct, some outward regard to the institutions and forms of religious worship, with a suitable attention to the decencies and charities of social life; and the argument wherewith they satisfy their minds that these things constitute the sum and

substance of true religion, is nothing more than this, that the world has so judged.— Why then trouble ourselves, they will ask you, with a matter so easily settled upon a very broad and simple basis?

Another part consists of men who are conscious, indeed, that their habits of life are at variance with the doctrine and rule of scripture; but who cling notwithstanding, to certain vague and shadowy expectations, founded on the abounding mercy of God, and connected it may be in their minds, with the remote and faintly conceived purpose of future repentance and amendment of life.— These, meanwhile, avoid the enquiry as one which would serve only to perplex and discompose their minds. They shun the light because they *love the darkness better than the light*.

It is the opinion of *yet another part*, that this question, am I a Christian? is one which cannot be determined; that no person whatever is able to come to a satisfactory solution of it; for that God has not designed that in this present life we should obtain a knowledge of his judgement concerning us. With these sentiments, they not only themselves avoid the investigation, but regard as visionary and presumptuous, all who, according to their apprehensions, *vainly* pry into hidden mysteries which they cannot resolve.

And, in forming this conclusion, that multitudes of professing Christians, in ways such as those now specified, do in truth shun all effectual enquiry into their religious state and character, I am not directing my view exclusively to the young, the very thoughtless and giddy-minded, and the uneducated. I see around me, in addition to these, many elderly persons, and many, who as respects the affairs of this life, are thoughtful, prudent, *intelligent*, of whom the remarks that have been made hold equally true; nay, who are but the more unconcerned apparently about their interest in a world to come, in proportion to the discrimination and forethought they exercise in providing for the futurity of their life upon earth.—The near and visible approach of *death*, it might well be imagined, should rouse the minds of all to a lively anxiety about the state of the *r* souls, and give rise *at length* to the enquiry, what preparation have I made for meeting God? In what frame is the undying spirit within me for appearing at the bar of final judgment? Were this indeed a uniform result of Death's near approach, yet who will venture to affirm that it is then *time enough* to begin in true earnest the business of the *spiritual* life, when the pains and terrors of the last conflict are impending, and the mind already sinks under the pressure of bodily sickness and disease. But

common observation, on the part of all who are familiar with these solemn scenes, will serve to confute the notion to which we have referred. How rarely is it seen that the work which has been forgotten through life, is remembered at death ! In how many instances, on the contrary, are men, once reputed shrewd and sensible, to be witnessed in their last moments, exclusively engrossed with the cares of time, and the necessities of their perishing bodies : as if they well believed that a momentary mitigation of their sufferings, or a day added to the term of their mortal existence, were more worthy their concern than the state of their soul's preparation for an eternity of bliss or of woe !

Reader, let me now ask, is your situation similar to that of which we have spoken ? Have *you* never made it the occasion of heartfelt enquiry to ascertain what is your actual spiritual condition—to discover if it be a thing possible for you to discover, whether or not you are a Christian ?

Are you unable at the moment you are reading these lines, to say upon any proper ground that there belong to you the scripture marks of a believer in Jesus ? Is it therefore impossible for you to assign any sufficient reasons for your hope of final pardon and acceptance with God, and admission into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus

Christ—if you do cherish such a hope in your breast?

Let us pause then, for a little, and reflect together, on the strange and alarming nature of *this uncertainty of soul* out of which hitherto you have sought no means of escape or deliverance.

You believe in the being of God: you believe in the doctrine of a future state; you expect ere long to die; you know that judgement shall follow death; and you are assured, because it is plainly written in the word of God, that Christ the righteous judge shall pass upon you the sentence of Life or Death. When this sentence shall have been pronounced, it is your belief that thenceforward you shall be everlastingly blessed, or eternally miserable; exalted, glorified, and blessed in the enjoyment of heavenly felicity, or cast down helpless and hopeless into the depths of Hell!

That such is the futurity of being to which you are fast hastening onward; you deny not, and you doubt not; you are sensible that every day brings you nearer, you cannot tell how much nearer, to the tribunal of God; to the hour of your trial, sentence, and everlasting doom! Nevertheless, whilst these considerations are familiar to your mind, and whilst a prospect so solemn is set before your eyes, it has never as yet been your study to enquire whether the

course you pursue, tendeth upward to the regions of light and glory, or downward to the habitation of darkness and woe. You journey on, ignorant of the country to which you hasten ;—nor to the Heaven-ward pilgrim who accosts you by the way, have you any pledge to offer that your destination like his, is the *celestial city* ; for you have no proof to show that you have entered in at the *strait gate* and are pursuing that *narrow way* which alone leadeth thither.

Oh Reader ! I need not tell you that this strange insensibility of mind to the results of our actions, this reckless unconcern of what awaiteth us, is not exhibited by man in the pursuits of a present life.—The lone traveller over the wide waste and the dreary wilderness of this world, hath his final destination in view. He endures the summer's heat, and the winter's cold ; he toils on his way amidst hunger, and thirst, and weariness, and many hardships. But then the land of his birth, the *home* of his youth, the dwelling place of his parents and his brothers and his sisters, are ever present to his thoughts. *Thither* he again hastens when the purpose of his long absence has been served. He comes with the fruit of his many toils, and with the tale of his many vicissitudes ; and if permitted to realize his fond anticipations, if suffered again to embrace the friends of his early years, and to

review the many objects of youthful interest, whose image is yet stamped upon his thoughts; then hath the object of his ambition, the end of all his hopes been attained. See yonder stately vessel so peeled and shattered by the winds, yet now at length safely moored on the peaceful strand. She was long time sorely beaten and tossed on the stormy deep: her decks were lashed by the fierce billows, her timbers were rent, her masts were loosened, under the crashing tempest. And yet the master of that ship, braved all the horrors of the storm; he set the sails; he watched the compass; he directed the rudder; he carefully examined the face of the heavens.—Why was it, that he strove so hard, and bore so patiently his ceaseless toil? or why in the midst of solicitude, and danger, did hope's bright flame glow with undimmed lustre in his breast? Think you that he steered his bark at random, ignorant of the course she pursued, heedless to note her progress, or careless to learn whether she approached a friendly or a hostile shore?—Nay, it was because his chart was familiar to his eye, and because he could trace his way even amid the trackless waters, and could tell where lay the rocks, which if approached too nearly, would founder his ship, and where the beacon tower to cast its light from afar, and where the safe roadstead, for

temporary shelter; but above all, it was because he had ever in view the well known *haven* to which he steered his way, and was assured that each succeeding billow brought him the nearer to his *destined port*, that his spirit was so confident, and his toils so cheerfully endured.

Surely *the men of this world are wiser in their generation*, more consistent in the prosecution of their enterprises, than they who call themselves *the children of light*!

To the force and application of these remarks, as indicating great, and most culpable indifference on the part of many professing Christians, to what so deeply affects their spiritual interests, an objection may be raised to which I have already referred. By some it may be contended, that God hath not designed it, that we should come to a clear understanding of our spiritual state in this life, nor hath in any way given us the means of attaining to this knowledge: and that we are consequently justifiable in avoiding as far as possible, all care and solicitude on the subject. And if the premises be just, we cannot dispute the correctness of the conclusion. Hath God not warranted the enquiry; nor furnished us with the means of bringing it to any certain issue? *then* undoubtedly it is our duty to abide as patiently as we can in this state of uncertainty and doubt, however perplexing to the mind such a state may seem.

But if, on the contrary, God has offered us the *means* of discovering the actual state of our souls, or even arriving at some considerable degree of certainty with regard to it; if especially, his will has in any way been signified, that we *should institute* such an enquiry, we cannot in that case dispute our obligation to engage, without loss of time in its prosecution. The whole force of the remonstrance which we have ventured to address to our readers, on this interesting subject, we freely admit must depend on the way on which *this question* is determined for us by the word of God; I hope therefore to be favoured with the serious attention of my readers, whilst I now proceed as briefly as the subject shall admit, to bring this question to the test of *scripture authority* and show, as I expect to do, that in his holy word, God *doth sanction* an enquiry, on our part, and *doth furnish to us all the means of determining whether we are or are not the disciples of Christ.*

II. Many passages of Scripture have a reference, more or less direct to the subject under discussion. We shall submit to our readers' consideration, those which appear to us the most suitable, not only for satisfying their minds that the investigation is warranted by God, but for enabling them to *test* their own knowledge of the Saviour, and their interest in his work, under the *four following heads.*

1. We are enjoined in God's word to *examine ourselves whether we be in the faith.*

2. The *original grounds, or causes* of difference, between the believer and the unbeliever, are declared to us in the word of God.

3. The *fruits*, which in the believer's life and conduct follow conversion, and accompany the influences of the Holy Spirit, are yet more fully stated and illustrated in the Scriptures.

4. In connexion with this last, there is the *co-witnessing* of the Holy Spirit.—

We earnestly recommend to our readers to make a *faithful self-application* of what shall be advanced under each of these heads.

1. We are required to examine ourselves whether we be in the faith.

Writing to to the Corinthians on the subject of the observance of the Lord's Supper, the Apostle thus expresseth himself.—I Cor. xi. 28., "*Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*" The reason for which this is required is at the same time stated, *for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.*—The examination required therefore must be of such a kind, as to enable him who makes it to judge of his ability for discerning the Lord's body, or in other words to judge of those attainments in knowledge and spiritu

ality of mind to which he has reached.— In the second Epistle, he employs the following language, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. “*Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates* ; and in the iv chapter of Galatians, ver. 3.4, “*For if a man think himself something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself, but let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself and not in another.*”

From the passages now quoted, it must be obvious to all who attend to their signification, that God *requireth* us to examine into the spiritual state of our hearts and characters, with the express view of discovering whether we are *something* or *nothing*, whether our *work* be such as to afford us good ground of rejoicing before God, or in other words whether we have the *faith of believers*.

It follows as a necessary consequence from God having *issued* this command, that we must have it in our power to comply with it ; opportunity must be furnished us for prosecuting the investigation, and there must be open to our use, sufficient materials for enabling us to form those conclusions to which the Sacred precepts now considered, necessarily point our view. Our divine master prescribeth not to any of his ser-

wants an impracticable or a fruitless task !

2 The *original grounds*, or causes of difference, in the state of the believer, from that of the unbeliever, are declared to us in the word of God.

The scriptures treat of the believer under two leading aspects. In the one, his character as a disciple of Christ is presented to our view, according to the foundation on which it rests, or the *sources* whence all that is peculiar and excellent in it are derived. In the other, it is offered to our contemplation according to the *consequences* which result from that change which divine grace hath wrought. Directing our attention in the meantime to the former of these, namely the *cause* of that change which takes place in the believer, and the sources from which it springs; we proceed to show our readers that the scriptures represent the state of the true christian, in language to the following effect. That he is born again.—That he is regenerated by the influence of the Holy Spirit.—That he is hence forward in a state of union with Christ.—That he is adopted into the family of God.

(1) The true believer is born again.

This we are told, Mat. xviii. 3. "*Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*" John iii. 3. "*Verily,*

Verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."—
Psal. cxix. 18. "*Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy love.*"

1 Cor. ii. 14. "*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*"

2 Cor. v. 17. "*Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.*"

Gal. vi. 15, "*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*"

Eph. ii. 4.5 "*But God who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ; (by grace ye are saved.)*"

(2) The change described above, is wrought by the agency of the *Holy Spirit*. Let the following proofs of this be attentively considered.

John iii. 5.6. "*Jesus answered verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.*"

Psal. li. 10.12. "*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right Spirit*

within me, cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me, restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit."

Rom. viii. 1.2 "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*"—The same line of argument is followed through the greater part of this interesting chapter. We refer farther, to 1 Cor. ii. 11. "*For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God. 14 The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.*"

2 Cor. iii. 3. "*Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not on tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.*"

Gal. v. 18. "*But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.*"

(3) On conversion, the believer enters into, and continues in a state of union with Christ. Of this point take the following scriptural illustrations.

Song of Solomon, viii. 5. "*Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved?*"

1 John. ii. 24. "*If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.*"

2 John, i. 9. "*He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.*"

John i. 9. "*That was the true Light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*"

John vi. 56. "*He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*"

John xv. 4. "*Abide in me, and I in you.*"

2 Cor. xiii. 5. "*Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.*"

Gal. ii. 20. "*I am crucified with Christ:*

nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Eph. iii, 17. *"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."*

(4) The believer is adopted into the family of God.

This peculiar privilege of Christ's people is mentioned by the Apostle in these verses.

2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. *"And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you; and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."*

Rom. viii. 15. *"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."*

Gal. iv. 4, 5. *"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father: Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."*

This, Reader, is the state of the Christian when considered with reference to the occasion of the change which has taken place in his soul, and with reference to those new relations in which he stands towards the divine author of that change. Now though

the Scriptures were silent, as to the *effects* upon the character and life, that should ensue; the simple knowledge of the *fact*, that a believer is actually placed in the situation now described, and continues throughout the remainder of his life to occupy that situation; affords we may affirm, no unimportant grounds for trying our characters, and going forward with the examination whether or not we are Christians.

For it surely follows, if a work has taken place in our souls; which the inspired word of God describes as regeneration, or a new birth, that an extensive change in the sentiments of the mind, and the affections of the heart must have resulted, or be in progress.

Hath God given us his Holy Spirit to abide with us, and dwell in us? are we *in the Spirit*? then it may be deemed as a certain consequence, that a far more Holy heavenly and spiritual complexion shall be communicated to the ordinary tenour of our thoughts and feelings, to the desires, the affections, and the hopes which we entertain and cherish in our hearts.

Are we in union with Christ, joined to him as a living branch to its parent tree; deriving nourishment from him, as the head and the members mutually sustain each other: the reconciled, adopted, and beloved children of his house and family? then is it to be inferred, not as a probable, but as a

certain consequence, that somewhat of *that mind which was in Christ, shall be in us*, that our souls shall be as one with him in all essential matters of love and faith, and obedience to the divine law; that *fruits of godliness* shall appear, as it were naturally, spontaneously, and abundantly in our life and conduct, the same as in our Lord's.

But the scriptures do not confine their intelligence, to an account of the change which takes place, and of the sacred original whence that change has its rise, within the Believer's soul.

As we proceed now, to show

3. *The scriptures also afford us much information respecting the extensive, Holy, and Happy effects which result from conversion*; and to this quarter above all, will he who desires to try his spiritual state, direct his anxious scrutiny, instigated to the work as he believes, by the plainly expressed intimations of the Divine will. For why should the features which distinguish the godly man's character, have been set forth so fully in the pages of the gospel, had not the Lord designed that trying ourselves by the standard here provided, we should come to a judgement on our own state?

Before entering on this branch of my subject, a sense of its delicacy, and its importance, call upon me to avow the difficulties, or rather the incapacity which I feel

of handling it aright. And with this consciousness, I have to request that the reader will regard the observations which follow, in the light of *suggestions* offered with a view to awaken enquiry and to point out the direction in which that enquiry should be pursued, rather than as the attempt at a full discussion of the question. The writer who would do justice to the interesting subject, of what may be called experimental Christianity, must possess two qualifications as to which I feel myself still greatly deficient; he must have a large and intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures, both in the letter and in the Spirit, and he must himself have taken an exact observation of the power of religion upon his own life and conversation, and on the hearts and lives of others. Yet imperfectly qualified in both these respects, as I know myself to be, I am not without the hope of opening up the subject *to such an extent*, and so arranging the Scripture authorities that relate to it, as in a measure to serve the purposes that have been mentioned; more particularly of showing the *direction* to be pursued by those who wish to prosecute the investigation.

Having made these preliminary remarks, I now go on to notice what may be called the primary result of conversion, or the initiatory work that proceeds from union with

Christ in the believer's soul, and this is, *the coming of the sinner unto Christ.*

Our Lord taught the necessity of this in order to our becoming, and being acknowledged, as his disciples, when he said, "*whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven, but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven.*" And he taught us what is implied in coming to Christ, when he farther adds, "*He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me.—He that findeth his life shall lose it and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it :* and in John vi. 35. *I am the bread of life ; he that cometh to me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*" viii. 12. *I am the light of the world ; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*"*

By all which we learn that, on the part of every true believer, there takes place at the outset of his Christian life, together with a discovery of the evil of sin, and the hatefulness of its yoke, a deep conviction of the mind that Christ's service is *the better part* that is worthy of being preferred to all beside ; accompanied with the resolution to turn away from every thing that can op-

* See to the same purport, Mat. xvi. 24.—John iv. 27.—Acts ii. 37.—Rom. x. 2.

pose a life of Godliness, to accept of Christ as he is offered, in the Gospel, and to follow him bearing his cross.

Such is the account given us of the beginning or *outset* of the believer, in his walk of faith and godliness, or in other words, of the willing acceptance, and active concurrence, which he gives to the call of the gospel. We proceed to what was mainly intended under this head, viz., to enumerate or describe, in the express language of Scripture, certain of the leading graces *proceeding from union with Christ*, and the operation of the Holy Spirit, which are habitually exercised throughout their after life, by those who have closed with the Gospel call, and have attained to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

(1). The Believer *hates sin*, and *wars against it*. Hear the language of Scripture on this point. Psalm 119. "*I hate vain thoughts but thy law do I love. Depart from me ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God. I hate and abhor lying, but thy law do I love.*" Gal. v. 24. "*And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.*" Rom. vi. 2 — "*How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? and, 6—knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*" I John, i. 6. "*If we*

*say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth."**

The regenerate mind, as with a new, spontaneous, and native impulse, regards sin with abhorrence, and recoils from its wilful and deliberate practise, how often soever betrayed by the weakness of the flesh into error and transgression. Let this essential feature of the Godly man be studiously considered, by all who desire to judge themselves by the standard of divine truth.

(2) *God's commandments are honoured and kept* by the Christian. Of this take the following proofs. Prov. xix. 16. "*He that keepeth the commandment, keepeth his own soul.*" Math. vii. 21. "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.*" xii. 50. "*For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*" John xiv. 15. "*If ye love me, keep my commandments. 21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.*"†

Reader, do you love God's command-

* See also Psal. lxxxii. 51.—Isa. lv.—Luke xv. 11. 21 —Acts xxix. 36,—Rom. viii.—2. Cor. vii. 9-11.—Gal. v. 5, &c.

† See to the same effect. Exod. xix. 8.—Deut. v. 27.—Psal. cxix. 4.—Luke xi. 28.—John viii. 51.—1 John ii. 3 4 5.6 17. v. 2.—Rev. xxii. 14.

ments ? have you an unfeigned desire to keep them ? do you delight in the law of God after the inward man ?

(3) The believer is *spiritually minded born of the Spirit*. From testimonies like the following, we learn that the frame of his mind and the sentiments and affections of his heart now exhibit a spiritual character.

2 Cor. iii. 18. "*But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*"

Rom. viii. 5. 6. "*For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*"

Gal. v. 22-23. "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law.*" 25. "*If we live in the Spirit let us also walk in the Spirit.*"

In this respect also, the character of the Christian bears a conformity to the sacred original, whence, as we have shown, its newness of life hath been derived.

(4.) The *Faith* of the Christian, is not a dead, but a living, active, and sanctifying principle.

Of this, the evidence is so full and of such ready access, that I content myself by referring to these two emphatic, though fami-

liar examples; the first, that of the centurion mentioned, (Matthew, viii. St. Luke vii.) of whom our Lord declared, *I have not found so great Faith, no not in Israel*; and the second, *that of Zaccheus, who, as described, (Luke xix;)* under the impulse of this principle, gave half his goods to feed the poor, and resolved to restore fourfold all that he had unjustly acquired. To which we subjoin the *definitions* of this great principle given us by the apostle. "*Faith which worketh by love.*" "*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.*"

Does *my* Faith triumph over the world? does it clothe with substantial reality, the things of an unseen Saviour and an unseen eternity?

(5.) The Christian is *humble—meek—patient—forgiving*. Has the Reader pondered with attention on these verses or others to the same purport, Matthew xix. 14. "*Suffer Little Children and forbid them not to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.*" Matthew v. 3—11. "*Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth, &c.*" Col. iii. 12. "*Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering;*

Then is he satisfied, we doubt not, that the followers of Christ, possess, and practise the graces to which we have just now referred.

(6) The Believer *loves the Brethren.*

“*All the law,*” saith the apostle, (Gal. v. 14.) “*Is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.—*” This saith our Lord, John xv. 12. “*is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness, even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.*” Again,

(7.) The Believer *loves God.* This he is required to do by the Law. Deut. vi. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy scul, and with all thy might.* But the Gospel also urges upon us the same requirement, ascribing the ability for its fulfilment, to the grace of God. “*The Lord thy God,*” it is said, Deut. xxx. 6., “*will circumcise thine heart and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live,*” as in Thess. iii. 5. *And the Lord direct your hearts unto the love of God, and the patient waiting for Christ.*” Whilst the necessity of the existence and presiding influence of this sentiment in the heart is not less plainly de-

clared, as by Rom. viii. 7. "*The carnal mind is enmity against God.*" 1st Cor. viii. 3. "*But if any man love God, the same is known of Him.*" 1st John iv. 16. "*God is Love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God; and God in him.*" Is it not implied of those that are without love to God, that they are *not* known of Him, and that He dwelleth *not* in them?

Let not the Reader pass by these two last heads, without again taking up the question, How does the case stand with my own heart? Has the love of God and the love of my brethren been engrafted there? Does my soul experience, does my life exhibit, the undoubted tokens of their presiding influence? It may assist us in prosecuting this enquiry to keep in remembrance the words of our Lord. "*No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.*"

(8.) We farther observe, *that the word and ordinances of Religion are pleasant to the Christian.* In proof of this—whilst we refer the Reader to the book of Psalms, particularly the 119th, and to many other passages of scripture, in which the preciousness of Divine ordinances to the saints of God, is declared—we adduce these instances Psalms cxix. 103. "*How sweet are thy*

words unto my taste ! Yea sweeter than honey to my mouth ! cxviii. 24. “ *This is the day which the Lord hath made ; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*” c. 1. 2. “ *Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands ; serve the Lord with gladness ; come before his presence with singing.*” 4. “ *Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise.*” Psalm lxiii. “ *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee ; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is ; to see thy power and thy glory as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.*”

From the same principles, we go on to observe,

(9.) That the Christian *takes a lively interest in Christ's cause, and the spread and progress of his kingdom.* “ *God is my record,*” saith the apostle in writing to the Philippians, “ *how greatly I long after you in the bowels of Christ.*” “ *I thank my God,*” he again exclaims, “ *upon every remembrance of you—always in every prayer of mine, making request with joy for your fellowship in the gospel.*” “ *Brethren,*” he writes to his countrymen, Rom. x. 1. “ *My heart's desire and prayer for Israel is that they might be saved.*” “ *Grace be with you all—mercy and peace and love be multiplied.*” “ *Grace unto you and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ,*” are the apostolic salutations to the various churches to whom the epistle

are addressed. "*He that is not with me,*" saith our Lord, "*is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. The harvest is plenteous ; but the labourers are few ; pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*"

In what light, let us ask, do the word of God, and the day of God, his courts, his sacraments, and instituted worship, and in what light do the various circumstances which affect the progress of Christ's cause, amongst men, and which may serve to promote or to hinder the glory of Christ's meditorial kingdom, appear in our eyes? Are they viewed by us with cold indifference? Or are they regarded with deep interest and emotion? Do they occupy much of our time and care? Are we joyful when it is said, let us go up to the House of God? Have *we* been taught to pray in the Spirit, that "*the Lord of the Harvest will send forth Reapers unto his Harvest.*"

There is only one other distinguishing feature in the character of the Believer, to which I am desirous of still directing the Reader's attention, having mentioned which my proposed outline shall be completed.—Let it be observed then,

10) That the Christian experiences *peace and joy in believing.*"

We do not affirm that the scriptures de-

scribe this as the uniform and uninterrupted experience of Christians; but rather as that, for the attainment of which, abundant provision hath been made in the gospel, and to which all who live in any measure up to their privileges do attain. The texts which we are about to quote, will show that this inward peace and joy may be experienced by believers in different measures according to the particular sources whence it springs.

—The apostolic salutation “*Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*” The charge of the apostles to the Philippians, “*Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say Rejoice;*” the frequent promises of Christ to his disciples “*That his peace should be left with them, and that their hearts should be made to rejoice,*” prove that peace and joy are *attainable*, were *destined* by Christ for his disciples, and ought to be *sought for* by them. Our Lord’s words to his disciples, (John xiv. 16. xvi. 13.,) show that it is by the *agency* of the *Holy Spirit* that this joy is shed abroad in the heart. Romans v. 1. 2. 5.—“*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*” “*And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Hol-*

Ghost which is given unto us ;” also 2 Cor. v. 1. Phil. iv. 7., as well as many other texts, prove that the belief or lively hope of being justified, having free access to God, and being heirs of Heaven, and also the experience of devout, godly, and gracious affections in the heart, *give birth* to this peace and joy.

Y Now the experience of many Christians as well as the Testimony of the Scriptures, clearly show that men may partake in *measure* of the happiness which flows from these sources, who have not reached to assurance of their salvation ; that amongst the followers of the Lamb, there may be many who have *good hope*, strong and lively expectation, that God hath accepted them, and that now they are in a state of grace and of union, with the Lord Jesus Christ, though they do not *assuredly* feel and cannot confidently declare that these blessings are now their's by the unquestionable seal and pledge of God. What has just now been observed is, we think essential to the proper understanding of the subject under review ; but it does not comprehend the whole of the doctrine of scripture on this subject.

It must not be concealed, and it must not be regarded as a thing of little account ; that free scope is provided by the author of our light and privileges, for the Believer's advance, far beyond the stage to which we

have just now attended Him ; that the Gospel Economy contains within it the means and materials for conducting the converted soul to the *settled conviction*, the fixed and established assurance, of salvation through Jesus Christ. “ *Wherefore the rather, brethren,*” says St. Peter, (2 Peter i. 10) “ *give diligence to make your calling and election sure.*” “ *The Spirit itself* ” it is affirmed by the Apostle Paul, (Rom. viii. 16.) “ *beareth witness with our Spirits, that we are the children of God ; and if children then heirs ; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.*”—“ *Grieve not the Holy Spirit whereby ye are sealed unto the day of Redemption,*” is an injunction of the same apostle to the Ephesian converts, (Eph. iv. 30)*

From these verses it is evident that we are required to seek after assurance ; and that by some it is *so perfectly attained*, that they distinguish the presence of God’s Spirit within their hearts ; that the Spirits’ testimony to their being God’s children, is a matter of *consciousness* with them, and, that being sealed by the Spirit, its work is a sure pledge, which they have in actual tenure and possession, of that blessedness that awaits them !

Reader, the satisfactions of which you have now heard, are real, manifold, and

* To the same purport, see 2. Cor. i. 22.—Heb. vi. ii.—1. John ii. 3,—1. John iii. 14.—1. John v. 12.

lasting. So soon as you have truly closed with the Gospel call, and received Christ for your Lord and Saviour, you have access given you to their possession. Yet must it depend much on the constancy, and strength of your faith, and the diligence with which you work out your salvation, and seek to make your calling and election sure, in what measure you shall enjoy them. Consult for your own happiness, as well as for the glory of your Saviour; and press onward toward the mark. Seek after a more intimate knowledge of Divine truth, a closer walk with God, and pray for a larger outpouring of spiritual gifts and influences on your own soul. Doing these things your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. *"Christ will dwell in your heart by faith."* *"Rooted and grounded in love, you will comprehend with all saints what is the length and breadth and depth and height of the love of God in Christ Jesus."* And you will receive *"the end of your faith even the Salvation of your souls."*

We have now brought to a close, our enumeration, of what we find described in the word of God, as the marks or features of character by which the true Christian is uniformly distinguished. When these are present in the heart and the life, the man who owns them is a Christian. *He is yet*

unconverted in whom they are wanting.— And after an attentive examination of these marks we think our Reader will be satisfied, that no person who will candidly try himself by the test which they furnish, should long remain in much perplexity, as to the actual condition of his soul.

Is his heart still unregenerate? the enquirer will discover that some of the principles of action and graces of the Christian Spirit now described, are wanting, though in regard to others he may be at a loss to determine the truth. The unconverted sinner will not find hatred to all sin, and love to all God's commandments, and love to God, and love to his people, harmoniously blended together, and governing his life, and conversation, as by a uniform law. He will not even find any counterfeits of these qualities, that bear a close, uniform, and lasting resemblance to them.

If, on the other hand, the heart of the honest and anxious enquirer has actually been renewed; though some of the graces which flow from the Spirit of God, may be so immatured and so inoperative, as scarcely to yield any evidence of their reality, others will afford unquestionable evidence of their presence and their power in his breast—whilst of none, will there be any clear and positive proof that they exist not. The careful investigation of the sincere con-

vert, therefore, should be attended with the cheering persuasion that God hath wrought a good work in his soul; that he is a member of God's family, by grace renewed in his mind, and enabled to walk with God in newness of life.

We began this treatise with some observations on the *unconcernedness or apathy*, so prevalent amongst professing Christians, with respect to the state of their soul's interest in Christ and the blessings of his salvation. And it was our first endeavour to conduct our reader's mind to this conclusion, that if means have been furnished us by God, for discovering whether or not we are true believers, then is it a matter not only strange and inconsistent, that any one should neglect to enquire into the true state of his soul, but it is glaringly at variance with the dictates of reason, self interest and duty.

Having proved, under the three heads, which have just been discussed, that the scriptures *require us to examine ourselves*—that they make known to us *the foundations on which the Believers character is reared*—and describe in a great variety of particulars *the fruits which follow conversion*, it is now sufficiently established that means have been furnished by God for enabling us to institute and in due time to determine the question whether or not we are true Believers; we would yet farther follow out the re-

marks that have been made to their legitimate consequences by adding a brief summary of the *advantages which may be expected to result* from a careful and persevering work of self examination conducted under the light of such scripture testimonies as those that have been adduced.

To one or other of the three following conclusions, we observe then, that the faithful and patient enquirer will be brought. He will be made sensible; either that he *wants the marks* of a true Christian—that his case in the mean time *is doubtful*—or that *evidences do exist* of a work of Grace having taken place in his soul. Each of these conclusions we will show, is calculated to issue in happy results.

In the *first* case supposed, that of the professing Christian in whom the marks of a disciple are *wanting*,—it is surely well that this discovery should be made so long as a remedy can be found.

No doubt you convey painful intelligence to a person who thinks himself in good health, when you tell him that he is labouring under a dangerous disease. You wound his peace of mind when you prove to him that his life is in imminent danger. But if you can show that the disease under which he labours, though dangerous is not incurable—if you satisfy his mind that the willing Physician, and the effectual remedy, are

still within his reach ; your friendly interposition is gratefully acknowledged, your reasonable advice is promptly followed.

A far more valuable discovery is made by the *sinner*, who *learns*, either by his own examination of the scriptures or by listening to the exposition of their saving truths on the part of others, the true state of his immortal soul, as alienated from God, and exposed to the curse of his violated law. It is true that unless this discovery is accompanied by a *convincing* work of the Spirit ; it will fail to issue in true Repentance ; the soul diseased sinner will not be led to the sin curing Saviour. Yet are we inclined to believe that they who have their minds put upon such a work, and brought to just apprehensions of their lost condition by nature, are already under the leading of this great teacher ; and that not many will be seen to stop short, and return to a life of ungodliness, whose minds are fully made alive to its misery and guilt.

It is a good thing, therefore, for the mere professor of Christianity to discover that he is not a Christian ; for the nominal disciple to know that in God's eye he is not a *real* disciple.

We now look to the *second* of the cases supposed, *His viz.*, who *cannot* in the meantime fully determine the question which it has been his business to investigate. This

man finds much to encourage hope, and much to awaken apprehension and alarm. The world hath powerfully attracted his heart; its snares have greatly prevailed in leading him to forget his Redeemer, and yet there hath been some interest felt in spiritual things—the Pearl of great price has not been altogether forgotten and despised.— And how many around us are in the state to which we now refer—one part of whom, amiable, generous, morally respectable, are not far from the kingdom of Heaven, but have not entered into it; whilst another part, but we fear less numerous, have undergone a regenerating work through the grace of God; but live far short of their privileges; and follow at a great distance their Heavenly Master.

The effects of a strict enquiry into the state of the soul, in whichever of these situations it may be placed, are calculated to be salutary. A measure of anxiety—fear—jealousy of Satan's devices, distrust of false grounds of confidence, desire after true peace, and a solid foundation for hope, are to be regarded, as under God's blessing, its natural results. And in the case of those who have embraced Christ as he is offered in the gospel; but have fallen from their steadfastness, consequences not less important may be expected to ensue. Shut out as they have necessarily been from the com-

forts and joys of religion, they will no doubt bewail when they are brought to a proper apprehension of the happiness they have forfeited. But still more will they lament with a lively and sincere regret, the waste of precious talents, and the loss of valuable opportunities, the injury they have done to that cause which of all others they feel to be most important, and the base and unworthy return they have rendered for the matchless kindness of their gracious Lord and Saviour. Under the influence of these sentiments, will not such enquiries as the following offer themselves to their thoughts? Whence arose my bygone failures and delusions? and through what means may I hope to avoid them for the future? What measures is it needful that I should adopt to become more dead to the world and more alive unto God. Where shall I seek for grace, that for the time to come I may walk worthy of that high and holy vocation wherewith I have been called?

These also we regard as precious results of a well directed enquiry into the state of the soul; for they are of a nature not only to protect the professing Christian from delusion and error, but to urge him forward to immediate assiduity in his master's service.—Let no one imagine, that his work of self examination has been properly conducted, if it fail to produce the latter of

these results in as high a degree as it does the former; if it fail to make God's honour and glory as dear to him as his own peace.

We have yet to consider the effects that are likely to ensue when the diligent enquirer rises up from the comparison of his soul with the divine standard, under the conviction, that he is *truly joined to Christ by faith* and therefore a partaker in all the privileges and hopes of God's people.

It will not be disputed by any one, that *this* result of self examination must necessarily contribute greatly to present happiness. To know that you are in union with Christ, a member of his family, washed from your sins by his blood—the object of divine love—the heir of Heaven! surely this cannot fail to produce a high measure of peace and comfort and joy of soul.

But some may ask, is not the frame of mind now described likely to occasion arrogance, pride, and sloth, on the part of those who attain to it? Are not men who now discover themselves to belong to the ranks of Christ's people, likely to boast of their high attainments, and to esteem themselves better than other men? and are they not tempted to say, we may now take our ease for our aim is accomplished, our object is attained, nothing more now remains for us to do? It cannot be disputed that many who have come to this conclusion, that they

were the members of Christ's family, and the sharers in his special grace, have been seen to act with arrogance, presumption, and self confidence.

, In most cases, however, in which this conduct has been exhibited, we are persuaded that false grounds of confidence, in consequence of an imperfect and partial examination of the character, had been taken up and entertained; and that in reality, had the scrutiny been more faithful, the true features of a regenerate heart would have been found wanting. And it may easily be shown that the natural consequences of union with Christ, and the assurance that flows from a knowledge of it, are the very opposite to those which have been described.

: You must surely love Christ more ardently when you feel yourself warranted to believe that he has redeemed you, and purchased for you by his own sufferings, the bliss of heaven. And though now the sentiment of fear for your eternal salvation may no longer stimulate your exertions, ought not the principle of gratitude to Christ, a feeling of community of interest with him, a *holy sympathy* with your Lord and Saviour in that work for which he died, to operate far more powerfully, not only in causing anxiety for your own spiritual progress and growth in grace, but especially in deepening

your concern for the conversion of sinners, the discouragement of sin, and the spread of the Gospel?

Christ's work is the Christian's work, Christ's cause is the cause of his believing *advance*. On the part of the enlightened Christian, the enquiry, am I a Christian? gives place to the equally important and interesting enquiry, by what means shall I *advance* to higher attainments in the Christian life. The former loses itself in the latter. It is most unseemly in his eyes that a son of God, an heir of grace, a friend of Jesus, should surrender great part of his precious time, and yield up his now spiritualized affections to the vanities of the present life, that he should allow envious and uncharitable feelings to harbour in his bosom towards his brethren; that he should halt in his opinions regarding the services claimed by God at his hands; or in any thing be found slothful and lukewarm in his master's service. He recognizes Christ's full and unquestionable right to the use of that body and that spirit which he hath bought with his blood. He obeys the call of the Gospel, *give me thine heart*. He is careful ever to maintain a conscience *void of offence towards God and towards man*.

True it is that instances do occur in which eminent and advanced Christians fall for a time from their steadfastness; and re-

lapse into sin, and when this comes to pass it cannot be denied that they lose the comforts, as soon as they lose the power of Godliness. Their spiritual affections lie dormant in their breasts; they are overlaid with the cares and anxieties of life; and if their past experiences of God's mercy are then recurred to at all, it is with feelings of suspicion and distrust, so long as pursuits altogether *alien* in their spirit, occupy their minds. The *backslider*, by the very frame of mind which for a time predominates in his breast, is excluded from a present sense of his interest in Christ. And Christ's Spirit no longer *witnesseth with his Spirit that he is a child of God*. But let not these considerations discourage any one from seeking to discover his true condition, and to make his calling and election sure. Troubled by a sense of doubt, distressed by a fear of losing all his former hopes, and forfeiting all the joys which he had already begun to partake, the lapsed disciple is for the most part soon roused up to a sight of his error, as well as to a sense of his unhappiness; he confesseth his transgression, and God is righteous to forgive the iniquity of his sin, he *again hears the voice of joy and of gladness*, and the *bones that were broken are again made to rejoice*. God restores to him the joys of his salvation, he upholds him with his free spirit, his lips are again opened, and his mouth sheweth forth the praises of the Lord.

Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith ; prove yourselves. Give all diligence to make your calling and your election sure.

The foregoing observations on the subject of self knowledge were written by way of an accompaniment to a little tract of no inconsiderable interest, which describes in his own words, the christian experience, and the attainments in self knowledge, of a godly minister of the Church of Scotland, who lived at the beginning of the last century.

The seventeenth century is distinguished in the religious History of Scotland, as one in which Godliness, Faith and Christian Fortitude, were illustriously displayed in the characters both of the ministers and of the people. Our Presbyterian fathers of that day were familiar with their bibles ; they highly esteemed the public ordinances of God's service ; they were instant and fervent in prayer ; the furnace of oft repeated and painful trials had been employed for a long while to prove the church in our land, to purge away her dross, and work out in her members that patience which begets experience, and that experience which is attended by godly hope that maketh not ashamed.

Many are the honoured names which associate the reigns of James and his two successors in this part of their dominions, with a profoundness of scriptural knowledge, a fervency of Christian Zeal, an inflexibility of holy Fortitude, and Faith, which are scarcely outshone by the learned fathers and the holy martyrs in the first ages of the church of Christ.

At the opening of the *eighteenth* century, when peace was now within our Jerusalem's walls, and prosperity had been restored to her palaces, the pulpits of our church were in many instances occupied by men who had been cradled and nurtured in the days of trial, and who had largely imbibed the spirit of the deep Piety and uncompromising faithfulness of their ejected and persecuted fathers. The people too were the sons and daughters of those who had suffered in defending the gospel which they loved, and protecting their religious privileges, which they more valued than their lives.

Could we now call up those men and those times to our view; could we bring before us the situation and circumstances of the people who then occupied the farms, and the hamlets, and the scattered villages where we now have our habitations, the contrast would not in all respects be found one to our credit and honour.

True, we should see the people of that

day clothed in a plain and homely garb, contented with mean and comfortless habitations, and subsisting on the coarsest fare; and in following them to their diverse occupations, we should be tempted to smile on beholding their rude implements of husbandry, their toilsome and profitless agriculture, or the uncouth artizanship, which their workshops might exhibit. But the picture offers itself to our view in another and a brighter light. These simple, and as we deem, uneducated men assemble, when the day is closed around the family altar, the turf fire blazes on the hearth, the evening lamp is lighted, the household meet together, the venerated parent unclasps his well worn bible, and all unlettered though he seems, he expounds with a devout and affectionate fervour the ways and the works and the *grace* of that God, whom he was himself taught to honour from the days of his youth. Stay yet, till you listen to his prayer, so fraught with pious thought, with humble trust, with grateful recollection, with earnest longing after grace here, and glory hereafter; and when you have seen that the same pious sentiment thrills in the bosom, and beams forth from the countenance of all around, then may you the better determine whether in the change which has come over the spirit and manners of the age, all on our part has been gain.

This was the period when the Rev. James Monteith fulfilled the office of the ministry in the parish of Borgue. Brought up in Ireland, which had recently offered an asylum for so many Scottish presbyterians, he had crossed over to Kilmarnock, though with what intention we are not informed, at the time when his views were matured, and his studies for the church were now nearly completed. He was licensed at Irvine in the year 1692, and shortly afterwards accepting the harmonious call of the heritors of Borgue and the presbytery of Kirkcudbright, to supply the vacancy in that parish, he was ordained and settled in Borgue the 18th of January, 1693.

Regarding Mr Monteith's person, his ministrations, and the circumstances of his family, only a few scattered traditions now remain among the more aged of the natives of Borgue, by *them* received in youth from their fathers or grandfathers, who again in their day were the contemporaries, and the hearers of this venerated pastor. These patriarchal legends of our parish, as we may term them, concur in representing Mr Monteith, as a zealous single-minded man of God, who was *instant in season and out of season* in doing his master's work, one who was feared, honoured, and loved by his flock. Exactly a century has now elapsed since he was called away by the

lord of the vineyard, to render an account of his stewardship, and as we doubt not to receive his place amongst those who shine as stars in the firmament, because they have turned many to righteousness.

His remains rest underneath the stone which was erected over the grave of his successor, the Rev. James Brown, in a spot contiguous to our former place of worship, but no inscription indicates the place of his interment, or bears record to his worth.

When his life and ministry seemed now drawing near an end, Mr Monteith committed to writing this which we have entitled his "Testimony to the grace of God," willing like the apostle, that the things which he had preached to his flock in public, and had commended by precept and example in private, should be had in remembrance after his decease. And though the original manuscript which contains these dying testimonies has been perused with interest by a considerable number, some having taken copies of it for their private use, yet we are of opinion that the enterprising Publisher is most effectually following out the author's intentions, as expressed at the outset, in now offering it to the public in a printed form. "*I do,*" says Mr Monteith in mentioning the occasion of his writing, "*most humbly and thankfully think*

it my duty to leave behind a few hints of the Lord's goodness to me, to his glory and to the edification of my children, and of any to whom these presents shall come."

We entreat those into whose hands this little volume may fall, especially the beloved members of our own flock, who in a certain sense may regard themselves as *the children* here mentioned, to read the tract in the same spirit, and to the same ends.—It is well calculated when so read, to kindle a measure of that fervour of heart, and zeal for God's glory, with which its author's spirit burned. And who amongst us, when we close the book, would not heartily desire that we might, at the termination of our pilgrimage, be privileged to look back upon a life governed by the same principles, directed to the same holy ends, and animated by the same hopes which are here described. What watching and striving against sin! what wrestling with God in earnest persevering prayer! what diligence and carefulness in the study of the word! what fulness of desire, hope, and expectation, in the use of public ordinances! what respect for every thing calculated to promote the growth of godliness in his own heart, or in the hearts of others! above all, what a deep sense of the fulness, the freeness, and sufficiency of divine grace, and what entire and habitual reliance on its energy! need we wonder that

the views of such a Christian were more spiritual, that his access to God should have been more close and more encouraging, than what we now experience in ourselves, or witness in others. Need we wonder, that one who so sought after life and truth in the very ways we are directed to seek, attained at an *early period* to a clear, settled, and enlarged understanding of the doctrines of the gospel; that he received these doctrines into his heart, and that it became *as his meat, and as his drink to do the will of his father in Heaven*. Need we wonder, in fine, that thus seeking the light, and thus walking in the light, he had an *experience* of its joy, attained to a full and nearly constant persuasion of his interest in Christ, or that in a few instances, this experience was of so vivid and overpowering a kind, as to leave on his own mind in an age addicted to superstition, the impression of a miraculous interposition, a *supernatural* event.—

Whilst in the instances to which we now refer, we are disposed to ascribe the impressions made upon the writer's mind, in part, to superstitious feeling, or in other words, to the influence of a lively and excited imagination, we have no hesitation in saying of the general experience here recorded, that it is in perfect accordance with the *life* of him who enjoyed it,—his lively exercise of faith, his diligence in prayer, his uniform

sense of the truth and power and excellence of Religion.

Let the *reader* imitate the conduct of this holy man in seeking God, and serving him with his whole heart, and we doubt not that *he too* will largely share in that delight in God, that love to the saints, that joy and peace in believing, which his artless narrative describes.

“Faithful” we say to every earnest enquirer *“is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”* *The Lord will deliver you from every evil work, and will preserve you unto his heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Now may the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole Spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

PART I.

THE TESTIMONY.

THE Lord of heaven and earth having been pleased to give me a being in his church, and enduing me with senses and reason ; and also, that I should be in the office of the Holy Ministry, now thirty-six years past in January last; and not knowing how soon I may be removed by death ; and considering the great and manifold mercyes I have met with in my day, notwithstanding my innumerable sins : I do most humbly and thankfully think it my duty to leave behind a few hints of the Lord's goodness to me, to his glory, and to the

edification of my children, and of **any** to whom these presents shall come.

I must still own myself to have been, and yet am, most unworthy to be in the least noticed by so great and holy a Majesty as Jehovah, or to have been favoured with the least of his mercyes ; but I own the Lord's goodness in giving me early in my youth, convictions of the evil of sin, original and actual, of heart and life, from his word read and heard, and to continue convictions on my soul in my life ; making me always low in my own eyes and noticing the workings of sin in my soul, it being my chief trouble to know so great want of conformity to the holy law of God, and such a proneness to evil and aversion to good. When sin prevailed I was restless until I had confessed, mourned over, and condemned myself for my own wickedness ; and had poured out my heart in prayer to God for mercy through Jesus Christ ; and resolved a-

of **gainst** the same in time to come : confessing sin, and condemning myself for **it**, the habit, motion, and actings thereof ; and fleeing to Jesus Christ, and the mercy of God, through him, was my way in prayer, in order to my attaining peace to my soul. The following passages of scripture "*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin,*" i. John, i. 7 ; "*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*" i. John, ii. 1. "*Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.*" Acts, x. 34, were of special use to me against the pollutions of sin in order to my having peace. Since I came to be concerned for sin, the motions of sin wounded my soul and were matter of

much downcasting in secret ; sin was so strong, close, deceitful, enticing, and (thus) often prevailing over resolutions, prayers, and hiding proper scriptures in my heart against it, as Psalms, cxix, 11, “ *Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee.*”—I found nothing less than divine power could quench the heat and break the power of sin in me, and when the Lord pleased to let it forth it was effectual. I found looking to Jesus Christ on the first motions of sin in the heart to be the only best way to oppose it ; and if this was neglected, its power grew exceedingly, and the affections presently kindled, and were inflamed wonderfully to the great loss of the soul. I found that Satan knows not only every one’s predominant (sin) ; but also uses a great cunning and force to excite it, contrair to the souls’ deliberate thoughts : to the contrary, I found it exceeding necessary to commit the keeping of my soul to the

Lord when going to sleep, least Satan should prevail. I found sometimes a wonderfull power suppressing the very first motions of sin in my soul, though all circumstances did concurr to excite the same, and so prevent sinning even in the heart. Reflections on this have been matter of joy and gratitude to God : but I had not experience of severall of these last mentioned things for some years.

2. It pleased the Lord to incline and enable me verry soon in my day to set times apart for considering my ways ; and for confession and humiliation for sins of heart and life, with an eye to Prov. xxviii. 13. "*He that covereth his sins shall not prosper : but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy,*" and Isa. lv. 7., "*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts : and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God*

for he will abundantly pardon," and to spend time largely in crying to the Lord for pardoning mercy through Jesus Christ; and I found much soul satisfaction in these exercises.

3. He was pleased very early to let me see the great evil of the society of the ungodly persons, and made me loathe and shun it by all means, and to continue the same in my soul; because I found the wicked and their way of living led to destruction: and to esteem the persons and society of the godly, and fearers of the Lord; and accordingly to frequent them, because I was bettered by them in my soul, according to the word of God, and saw (that) they and their way tended to everlasting blessedness. This continued constantly in my life in all places and times.

4. Very early he inclined me to read and consider the blessed scriptures, and read them carefully, and treasure them in my heart, with a view to soul

profite ; and I found them to be most refreshing to my soul, so that I highly esteemed them, and they became my delight and my counsellors night and day. He made me attend carefully on the preaching of the gospel, and to read the best books I could get ; which informed my judgment, and excited my affections, by degrees, to my great satisfaction.

5. I was by the Lord's good hand much inclined to secret prayer to him verry early, though I had advice or example before me from verry few, but the contrair ;¹ and to spend much time in prayer alone, not being content only with morning and evening as most who pray any, are ; and found Prov. viii. 17, "*I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me,*" and Jer. xxix. 12. 13, "*Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for*

me with all your heart ;" to be most true in my own experience, with other scriptures to that purpose ; which did exceedingly engage me to that duty ; and must declare (that) if people were more frequent and earnest in prayer they would soon find more profit than can be told by words.

6. He was also pleased to give (me) a real soul concern about the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of an interest in him in my verry youth ; and I had many doubts anent these things, which by degrees were cleared up to me by the preaching of the word to my great satisfaction ; so that in my youth it was rare to hear a sermon without something suitable to my case sensibly sent home to my heart, as if the minister had preached to me alone ; which made me make my case known to none but only to the Lord in prayer, finding by experience he could direct the preacher to speak to my case though

unknown to him, most distinctly. This strongly engaged me to hearing as God's ordinance:

7. I was early also much concerned to know if I had a new heart and was born again in my youth; which was a matter of much exercise in my soul; finding I was graceless by nature and an heir of wrath and a lump of corruption before God, and that untill I was born again I could not enjoy the kingdom of God, John, iii. 3. "*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily verily I say unto thee. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,*" nor pretend any interest in Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. v. 17. "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are past away; behold, all things are become new,*" and that nothing could avail me but a new creature, Gal. vi. 13. "*For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law: but desire to*

have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh." This led me to be inquisitive about marks of particular graces as of faith, repentance, &c., which were by the Lord's blessing often cleared up to me by the preaching of the word satisfyingly by degrees; which begat in me a great esteem of preaching and preachers, as means in the Lord's hand of my soul's welfare. Religion came not to me in a careless way, as many seem to think they may be good christians without soul exercise about their salvation, but (I) am sure it was not so with me.

8. In my youth I was inclined and enabled to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is offered to sinners in the gospel, according to my capacity then, and to rest on him alone for my salvation as I read, Acts, xvi. 31., "*And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*" I. John iii. 23. "*And*

this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.” John, iii, 16. “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life :*” and the Lord inclined and enabled me to continue therein more and more as I grew in years, knowledge, and experience, and that more distinctly and satisfyingly ; finding christians live by faith on the son of God, Gal. ii. 20., “*I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me ;*” that Jesus is the only Saviour, Acts, iv. 12. ;— “*Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men where,*

by we must be saved ;” that christians should be coming to him as a living stone, Pet. ii. 4 ; “ To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious ;” and that often believing on Christ was the way to increase faith, and to dissolve doubts about the truth of faith being in the heart, and to receive more of the influences of the holy spirit, John vii. 38, 39 ; “ He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. “ But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive : for the holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.”

9. I was long inclined, though weakly in youth, to serve the Lord : and I found not only strong opposition from lusts in the heart, but it pleased the Lord to permit Satan to assault me with horrible temptations and sugges-

tions most blasphemous, which put me to many thoughts and prayers going to school alone, that many days I was unreasonable, by stoppings in the way, and praying for help from the Lord; and what made this the more heavy, was my not knowing that such things came from Satan, and thinking all came from my own plagued heart, and my not having confidence to make my condition known to any mortal. In this way was I tossed about a year; then the well and all disposing Lord, in his mercy, directed the minister to preach on the spiritual armour, Eph. vi. 11, 12; *“ Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. “ For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places;”* and cleared up how the difference be-

tween Satan's temptations, and the workings of sin in the heart, may be known ; which gave me a great ease in my soul, though (it did) not totally remove what distress I was under. Then I took courage and went on with much fear and trembling. but I can say "I was brought low and he helped me." I write not this to discourage any from joyning themselves to the Lord, but to prevent dispondency if any come to be assaulted by Satan ; for such will find the Lord gracious, one who will never leave his people in their distresses, but will help as he hath done me and many others.

10. I cannot express how often, and where, the Lord has been pleased graciously to visit my soul from my youth, through my lifetime, alone, and in public ordinances : but to his glory I do affirm from my own experience, often repeated, that "it is good to draw near to God," Psal. lxxiii. 28, and "that the Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the

soul that seeketh him," Psalm lxxv, 4. *Blessed is the man whom thou choos-
est, and causest to approach unto thee,
that he may dwell in thy courts ;*" that I have myself to blame that I had not unspeakably more of the Lord's presence with my soul than I have attained.

11. Since the Lord was pleased to incline and enable my heart toward him, I found zeal to be in my heart toward all I could discern to have any thing of the fear of God, and an high esteem of them ; though they had some things in their way I could not approve of, and differed from me in their judgment in some points; and as I increased in years I found a real desire for the salvation of all mankind.

12. I found a real concern for, and sympathy with, the interests of Jesus Christ on the earth, from the time he engaged my soul to himself; which increased in my day, and by de-

grees became in a manner as habitual, as to breath : as faith led me to prefer his interest above any small things of my own, and to be day and night praying for the coming, as cordially as for my own salvation. Isa. lxii. 3. *“Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.”*

13. Also, from my youth, I found a strong desire in my soul, that others should joyn themselves to the Lord ; to serve him, and walk in his ways, according to his gospel ; in order to their glorifying and enjoying him for ever : and in my capacity then did press others, by such reasons as I was master of, which inclinations the Lord hath continued in my life, and prevailed with me to be as easy with others, as I durst be in my way of living with them.

14. I had from my youth a low esteem of myself, and of any thing I did at any time ; being still conscious

of my own weakness, sinfulness, and short-comings in my whole way of life, but highly esteemed others and their ways, far above me, and my way; therefore did often conclude myself to be the chief of sinners, and the least of saints: a sense of which made me tamer than otherways I could have been.

15. I found my heart very bent to preserve, and to promote, peace among christians, and in the church of Christ, as far as could consist with truth and peace with God; and found great aversion to discord and schisms; being clear in my soul, that the directions of the Spirit in the word, urged peace, unity, and love; and that contentions flowed much from darkness, and some humours in the heart; though possibly not seen by some, in other respects wise and good men.

16. The Lord was pleased to incline and enable me, to designe the glorifying and enjoying of him, as my chief end

even in the most solemn and public actions. When that was fresh on my soul, I found things going best with me; when I attained not to this, I found not that help from the Lord, that at other times I found. From this I gathered not only that the Lord knows man's heart, but is pleased with uprightness; and so the more upright any are, the more help will he give.

17. I found my soul taken up to perform duties in secret and in publick, depending on the Lord Jesus Christ for strength; without which I found I could do nothing to the glory of God, or my soul's satisfaction and profit. When he helped me to depend, I found sensible help; but when I ventured without a due dependance, the duty was done, but no sensible pleasure in my soul upon reflections. Hence I concluded, that it nearly concerns every one who minds duty, to be dependant on the Lord Jesus, and to be learning in

practice, what is directed, Col. iii. 17. *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him,*" and not to be going on in the exercise of the natural and rational faculties, as some speak in an inordinate way.

18. I can, to the glory of grace affirm, that my soul was as really taken up in secret duties, as ever in any duties before men, to get them performed aright as to the manner: and, believing that the eye of God was upon me, and all was open to him who sees in secret, I found his help, sensibly before others, when I did not depend upon help already received, but only on him, as if I had not help alone.

19. Tho' alas I fell every day far short; yet it was my great concern of soul, to live in all places, like my profession of Christ and his gospel. This was really my design and endeavour

how to have these two going together in my life; and finding disagreement here, especially in my heart, it kept me verry low in my own eyes. The consideration of this, discovered a necessity of a daily application, by faith and prayer to Jesus Christ in all his offices, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and made me wonder how any true christian could be proud, and live without frequent use making of Christ by faith; or have any thoughts of their justification by their own works, or the merits of others, and not look, only to the free grace, and merits of Jesus Christ, according to the gospel, and as all saints, recorded in the scriptures, did in their day.

20. The Lord was pleased, to incline and enable me, cordially to resigne myself, soul and body, often to God in Christ; and my all to be allso truly at his holy, wise, and powerful disposel, for time and eternity, to his glory

and my salvation ; though alas, when cross dispensations came, and lay on, I had many perverse workings in my heart, until He was pleased to discover to me, some of his blessed ends of his dealings with me : then I in some measure approved of his conduct as holy, wise, and just ; and that he was righteous in all his ways.

21. The Lord was pleased, even early in my youth, to incline me to acknowledge him in my ways, believing that it was not in man to direct his steps. I found after sometime, that his disposal was best for me, circumstances and consequents being considered : poor man would be wise, and is much inclined to project things, and desire them, though they would be his ruine, if God permitted them to come to pass.

22. As soon as the Lord was pleased to work in my soul in a saving way, I found a prevailing inclination in me, to take speciall notice of the Lord's day,

and the work of it, as most sacred and pleasing to God, and most profitable to my soul ; and did as much as I could to avoid society, in going to and coming from, the publick ordinances of God ; finding by experience, that a verry small discourse, put me out of case to wait on God, and that according as my frame of soul was, so were the ordinances blessed to me, or dry and sapless. “ The Lord will draw near to them that do draw near to him,” James iv. 8. *“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners ; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.”* They who seek him will find him, and they who find him, will find life.

23. I found early a singular esteem of Christ's servants in the ministry of the gospel, for their works sake ; but especially of these whose labours the Lord was pleased to bless to my soul, Their memory and dust was dear to

me always. I shunned to know any thing wrong in ministers ways, knowing it stood in the way of my soul's profite exceedingly ; but loved to know what was praise-worthy. Oh ! how watchfull and tender should ministers be at all times, least they ruine souls unawares.

24. As the Lord was pleased to incline me early to go to himself by prayer in all sorts of difficulties ; so I cannot deny his being the hearer of prayer, most graciously, faithfully, and seasonably, and according to his word, and my various necessityes, from my youth, untill I came to Scotland, April 1689.—These are some general hints of the Lord's goodness to me, a distressed sinner.

25. When I came to Scotland, April 1689, I found the Lord with me and doing for me ; ordering my lot to be among a well disposed people in Kilmarnock, who were kind to me beyond

what I a stranger could have expected. But he hath all things in his hand. I found the Lord concurring with his servants in the ministry, here, as in Ireland, to my soul's great satisfaction, and establishment in the faith and hope in the gospel. O how blessed were many days to me while I was there in secret and in publick! the Lord was verry gracious to my soul, far beyond what I could express.—March 30th, 1690;—that Sabbath evening what light, life, and comfort, he was pleased to let out on my soul; it was better to me than all things in the world, though it did not last long; and perhaps all in consequence of my miscarriage and mismanagement of such a condesending love-visit, from so great and so holy a majesty, as the Lord is.

O how watchful, how humble, thankful, and tender should all be, after gracious nearness with the Lord; such a

mercy may be soon lost, but not so soon obtained. From the beginning of October that year, untill April 1691, I had terrible onsets from satan's injections of blasphemous thoughts into my soul ; which were most grievous to me, and laid me low night and day, and were occasion of many perplexing thoughts and many prayers : but the Lord most graciously delivered me, as I shall afterwards declare, to the praise of his most free and rich grace.

The Lord's Supper was appointed to be celebrated in Kilmarnock, July 5th 1691 : then it was my work how to enjoy nearness with the Lord, in that ordinance. Before the day, I was led to draw up twelve articles to be considered and consented unto with my soul, and afterwards to be signed with my hand, which he helped me to perform. They all may be summed up—in my giving up with sin, righteousness, and strength ; dedication to the Lord and his ser-

vice; and adhering to the whole covenanted reformation. The Lord was gracious to me at the work, beyond expression; my adherence to the articles was renewed there, June 5th 1692, and at Kilwinning, August 20th 1692, before partaking of the sacrament there.

I was licensed at Irvin to preach, September 14th, 1692. I found it considerably uneasy to compose a sermon for sometime; but being urged by ministers, I essayed as the Lord assisted me. The second day after I was licensed, when I was desiring the Lord to dispose of me as he saw fit, there came two letters to me, one from the moderator of the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, and another from an heritor, in Borg; in their names, desiring me for the Lord's sake, to come and help in the great vacancies the bounds were in: this surprised me, having never been in the countrey, nor having any person in it I had acquaintance of.—

The words "for the Lord's sake come and help," so warmed my spirit, that I forthwith wrote to them to send for me about a month afterward, which they did; and accordingly I came to Borg, October 20, 1692, without any thought to stay in the countrey longer than about a month, and to return. But the Lord was pleased otherways to dyspose of me, so that on the 8th day of November following, Heritors, Elders, and heads of familyes in Borg, had an unanimous call signed for me; which the presbytery delivered to me to be considered, and prescribed several pieces of tryals in order to ordination, and appointed me to supply the congregation of Borg with preaching every Lord's day; which was hard enough for me who had preached only three Lord's days in the West, and one sermon in the afternoon at Kilmarnock before I came to Borg: but the Lord is the best of masters to serve. I found no ability to

reject the call, so was ordained on the 18th of Jan. 1693. I undertook that charge only untill the Lord should provide, and send better gifted men for the work of the ministry; being conscious to myself of my own unfitness for so great a work as the ministry of the gospel is, and that great congregation for number. Being ordained to the ministry, I set about it cordially; concluding it was not a place for leisure, but for work in the Lord's vineyard; not for idleness, but for labour. The doctrines the Lord led me to preach, and my whole behaviour in the ministry, I leave to others, who were witnesses to all cognossible to men;—what way I spent my secret hours, the Lord knows, was not idle: many times the thoughts of my being a minister made me tremble, and many times I wondered that people waited on my ministry, considering what a poor sinful nothing I was.

It pleased the Lord to lead me to

spend seasons in secret prayer, many times, with much satisfaction to my soul ; though I always thought little or nothing of my prayers in comparison of others I heard ; I many times found divine help far above my expression : He was pleased to make my studying of sermons, &c., most easy and pleasant, especially when I could pray and depend on him. I can now to the glory of free and rich grace, give an account, though imperfectly, of some special enjoyments of the Lord's goodness to my soul.

In June 1686, having received a token in order to my partaking of the ordinance of the Lord's supper, (having sometimes partaken before then,) I rose near break of day on the Lord's day, and went into a wood a considerable distance from any house, and set about prayer, often and long, untill about seven or eight that morning ; but found not the frame I desired, but great strait-

ning in my soul: for which, being much cast down by the way to the meeting house, I resolved not to partake that day; but having a token I would enter the house, though I feared by wanting a frame, I wanted Christ's token. But it pleased the Lord to direct the minister who spoke first, to have Mat. v. 3. "*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,*" for his text; and what he spoke, so suited my case, and the Lord did so bless it to my soul, that my-straitning was dissolved before he ended his discourse. The minister of the place was directed to preach the action sermon from Isa. v. 3. "*And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard,*" and what he spoke, by the power of God, was so blessed to my soul, that my bonds were loosed to my great satisfaction, and I did partake with refreshment of soul. I went immediate-

ately after I rose from the Lord's table, to go alone and pour out my soul to the Lord : it was a warm sun-shining day ; as I went into a wood at some distance, the earth seemed to me to move, as a ship at sea. Being at the place I fell down in prayer to God ; there I stayed about three hours, but verily cannot tell in words how I was enlarged and overpowered by divine influences, with Rom. v. 1. 2. 3. 4. and 5. *“ Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ : by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also : knowing that tribulation worketh patience ; and patience experience ; and experience, hope : and hope maketh not ashamed ; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.”* O how was

my soul filled with life, light, strength, and joy, as I never had any experience of before; embracing the rich and free and everlasting offers of the gospel, to me a poor sinner through Jesus Christ! I was taken up in admiring the free grace of God. O what power, what peace, did I then enjoy! for many days, the sense of this remained on my heart. When ever I read or thought on the holy scriptures, they were wonderful clear to my understanding; then every duty in secret was easy and sweet; then the word, ministers, preachings, and christians were sweet to me indeed; and, let Atheists think what they will, I found the power of a Deity; let Arians say what they please, I found Christ's divine power above the reach of natural faculties exercised at the utmost. No enthusiastick spirit moved me; all was with the word of God, and according to it, found in my soul, blessed be God for ever and ever: Amen.

In the latter end of Aprile, 1691, having been most part of the winter and spring before, under verry great distress of soul by Sàtan's injections of blasphemous thoughts into my mind, and his other temptations which occasioned many perplexing thoughts about my salvation, and many prayers to the Lord, for help; and not having conveniency by day, I resolved to spend the night in prayer and other dutyes in order to an outlet from the Lord: and behold about break of day, it pleased the Lord on a sudden to fill the room where I was alone, with such light, power, and presence, as I never found the like before on earth. It overpowered my soul, clearing all my doubts about my effectual calling and salvation, so that I could say nothing for some time, only stood trembling and weeping with uplifted hands, and only saying, I would not misbelieve as I had done, that I was effectually called. Then was my soul enlarged,

strengthened, and filled with light, life, joy, and peace in believing, far beyond expression. This continued some days as to some degrees of it, and was in my chamber at Kilmarnock. I was brought low and he helped me, none is an helper like the Lord.

On November 2nd, 1695, I was assaulted by Satan with twelve different temptations, which pressed me sore, as if my soul had been drawn asunder twelve different ways at the same time; and those were backed with the scriptures, as he tempted our Saviour, Mat. iv. 1. "*Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted.*" I could not shun them, they cleaved so to me, nor in the use of any duty overcome them; neither durst I tell my wife or any mortal, least it should discourage them in the good ways of the Lord; only to the Lord I made my moan day and night, who alone knew all and could help in any distress; but like one in

quick sands, the more I pressed to be relieved, the more deep I sunk, and was the more ensnared. This was my case near five days. At last the temptation came to an height, and I resolved to go to bed and speak no more in this world to men, nor pray to the Lord any more, so told my wife I was not well, and would ly alone; so accordingly went to my chamber, fully determined as above. I was scarcely entered the room alone, when I heard one whispering to me,—“pray once more to the Lord before you go to bed and speak no more.” I listened and heard distinctly; yet my foolish unbelieving heart did reply, it was in vain if I should, having so often prayed for help without success, as I desired; yet the issue was, I would pray once, be as it will.

O wonderfull goodness of the Lord, no sooner was I on my knees, then an inexpressible power came on my soul with light, life, and sweetness, with

pertinent scriptures answering all the temptations one after another, so that they were all effectually removed, as if they had never been in my heart, and instead of them, many scriptures came with power on my soul, whereby it was wonderfully refreshed, enlarged, eased, strengthened, and comforted, and also my verry body was strangely at ease, as one made whole by the Lord, before whom I was humble, joyful, and thankfull, as one who was dead and made alive, bound in fetters and loosed. Let none who seek the Lord give way to despair, whatever be their distress ; for the Lord can soon help, and is a present help in time of need, and when his people are lowest, his help is nearest, Isaiah xli. 17. *“ When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.”* O ! what is man before a

temptation, and how sympathizing and condescending is the Lord to his own in distresse ! none is like him ; O fear the Lord ; O bless the Lord ; O trust in the Lord, all ye his saints.

June 28th 1696, having preached at Girthon, the day before the administration of the Lord's supper, being Saturday, after my return home, and going alone, it pleased the Lord graciously to discover himself and his will in his gospel covenant, and his divine love for me, and powerfully to draw out my soul toward him into a most melting frame, and to open my heart, not only to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ as offered in the gospel; but also to acknowledge God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost to be my God, and everlasting portion in time and eternity, and to enable me to dedicate and devote myself, soul and body, to him and his service for ever, and that with as much soul enlargement and spiritual sense of his goodness, mercy, grace, and

love to me, as I could desire on earth; then I had no hesitation anent an interest in God in Christ and his special love to me, of his being my reconciled God in Christ, of my being pardoned, and of my enjoying real gracious fellowship with him in gospel duties and ordinances. O what soul-strength had I then, what comforts, what sweet repose of soul in a nearness to a gracious God in Christ far exceeding, far above all expression. This frame lasted through that night, next Lord's day and most part of Monday, but alas it went off that evening for most part; the Lord is sovereign to give or withdraw his influences as he pleaseth, but surely it is good to draw near to God in his ordinances according to his word; all who speak or think against the reality and soul-satisfaction real believers enjoy in fellowship with God, as delusions of crazie brains, will surely in the end find they have been speaking against his

gracious operations, which they were wholly ignorant of in experience, and will find in the end their going about duties exercising only their natural faculties, to be unacceptable unto God and unprofitable to their souls; and that their contenting themselves with serving God in an outward formal way and slighting the internal spiritual part, hath been the spring of their eternal ruin when perhaps too late,

July 8th, 1706, being the Monday after the celebration of the Lord's Supper, in Borg, Ebenezer then my only son took ill; when I rose I saw he was dying. I went into a chamber, leaving his mother and others with him. I cannot express how it pleased a gracious Lord to show himself to my soul, there, with light, life, strength, and consolation, clearing up to my soul, that he was my God in Christ, and the God of my seed for ever, with such power that I could not desire more on earth; and

heaven came down as it were to my soul, with such light, power, and sense that I had not room to receive more, though my soul was indeed unexpressibly enlarged at that time. I thought if I had a son every day in my life afterwards to die, I could most easily part with them, and say most cheerfully, Lord take them to thee, and a thousand blessings to thee for doing it. I staid a considerable time alone, I cannot tell how long it was, but when I came unto him, and saw he was near his end, I desired him to look to Jesus Christ, the only Saviour. He observed me, though weak, and smiled, and in a moment after, he departed this life; in the meantime my soul was so serene and filled with joy and peace, that I had ado to keep myself from leaping in the room, and never had one moment of sorrow for his death, though he was gone in the sixth year of his age, and showed extraordinary capacity and fond-

ness toward all that was good, and an abhorrence of all evil, and an only son, five dead before; this frame lasted some days. O the wonderful goodness of God to me, a poor sinner! religion is a real thing; how establishing a thing is grace, and how comfortable is divine presence when the Lord pleaseth to give it! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; because the Lord has been my help, rejoice O my soul in the shadow of his wings. I went as soon as he was laid by as a corpse, unto the church-yard, and heard the Monday sermons, with singular satisfaction, and preached a thanksgiving sermon next day, it being appointed for that in this Church and land.

June, 1696. After many thoughts and prayers, I did draw up the articles of a personal covenant between the Lord and me, and signed the same on the 22nd day of this year as follows:—

O Eternal God, Father, Son, and

merits ; O God I humbly protest that unhallowed miscarriages shall not make this covenant void and null, and that I make this covenant this day, without any known reservation, as witness my hand at the Manse of Borg, June 22nd, 1696.

(Signed,) James Monteith.

The above covenant was adhered unto expressly every year, before the administration of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper here, and before I did partake of his supper in various places at a distance or near hand, where I was called to assist and was present, and that, blessed be the Lord, often with much sensible satisfaction in my soul, until the year 1716. Then fearing that so often adhering, might, by the deceitfulness of my heart, become customary, and to be rested on, in any degree as meritorious. I forbore until July 17th 1724, adhering only in ge-

neral; but I must own, I found not any encouragement from above at partaking, by omitting expressly to adhere these years as I did formerly.

The places I adhered unto the above covenant the above years before partaking of the Lord's Supper, were at the manse of Borg, often also at Kirkcudbright, Balmaghie house, at Lochrutton, Girthon, Anwoth, Rerrick, Glasserton, Penningham, Dalry, Kells, Balmaclellan, Crosmicael, Tongland, Irongray, Dumfries, and Terregles.— I found the Lord very gracious to my soul in secret at all these places. I mention these places, to his praise who is most gracious to them who seek him in any measure of truth and diligence, faithfully making out his promises.— O my soul why dost thou not love, rejoice, fear, obey, and bless the Lord for ever, still more than thou hast done, seeing thou hast found his wonderful condescensions and goodness to thee in

the land of the living, notwithstanding all thy sins? O dull soul, and slow to believe.

As my soul was much concerned for the public interest of Christ every where, so it became in a manner natural to me to have it always in my heart, Isa. lxii. 1. 6. *For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day or night. ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence; Psal. cxxxvii. 5-6. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.* The thriving of religion in Borg,² and my own salvation-work, were the

things that most occupied my soul in subordination to the glory of Christ.

In the year of God, 1703, when things were like to go wrong, as to religion in this land, I had many thoughtful hours about it, which did continue for some time, and especially in the year 1707, about the union of these lands of Scotland and England. I could never think it consistent with the engagements Scotland was under, to consent that Prelacy should subsist in England, though I was fully convinced, that church Judicatories, as such, could do no more than they did in this matter.

I must own when the news of the Pretender's coming to sea was made known, that after several hours and several days were spent, I was assured in prayer he would not succeed in his undertaking, from Scriptures powerfully impressed on my soul, which made me weep for joy when the news came of his

defeat. As things grew dark until August 1714, I cannot hide it, that my soul was established in prayer by the Holy Scriptures, that the Pretender's party would be disappointed, and even on the 15th, I had no fears anent the Lords appearing and breaking that party as they were; and accordingly preached and wrote to some friends who doubted about it. This I ascribe to the glory of free grace alone encouraging earnest addresses to him in a dark hour, being far in my soul from enthusiastic dreams. I can attest that there is a real intercourse with God in Christ in these ways of duty on earth, which those who are strangers do not know; yet they are sometimes so sensibly enjoyed by Christians, that they would not want them for all the earth.

PART II.**A D V I C E S .**

I come now to give some advices to you my dear children, and with the greatest earnestness and fatherly affection, charge you to observe them in your day on earth; and the same in substance to all in Borg.

1. Lay yourselves out to know the will of God contained in the holy scriptures of the old and new testaments, summed up in the Confession of Faith and in the larger and shorter catechisms, which you have in your hands, as the undoubted truths of God, and cleave to them, oppose them who will; and, in order to this, seek carefully in prayer, experimental knowledge of these truths in your own souls.

2. I recommend to you to spend much time in secret prayer to God, through Jesus Christ, as a most neces-

sary duty and profitable. O neglect not cordial prayer, as ever you would have the Lord's countenance and gracious presence with your lot and sojourning on earth.

3. Carefully attend the ordinances of God, as he pleases to give you opportunity, studying by all means to meet with him and enjoy his presence and receive blessings from him; I do not mean that bare attendance will be for your soul's profit. Be at pains before you go to them to be at ease, and in the time take heed to your spirits and depend on the Lord for his blessing through Jesus Christ; look over the teacher to God in Christ, esteeming all such occasions as precious talents put in your hands, to improve to the glory of God your own salvation and the edification of others.

4 Esteem highly the ministers of the Gospel for their royal master Jesus Christ's sake, and their work's sake.—

Your lot is fallen in a Christ-dispising age, a gospel-ministry-despising time, most people being earthly, carnal and sensual, not considering how great a mercy it is to have the gospel ordinances dispensed in purity, nor the glorious end of the ministers,—to bring sinners from Satan's service to Christ, from Hell to Heaven, from misery to felicity. Look not for a perfect man in the ministry, neither pry too narrowly into their infirmities, which may possibly be their grief, nor blaze them abroad behind their backs, but love them, and pray for them ; know that the whole success of their labours depends on the Lord's concurring with them in their work, and their labours will have more weight with you, when you love them and esteem them.

5. Be sure to be sincere in believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is held out in the gospel, receiving him and resting on him for complete salvation,

he being not only the alone Saviour, but a complete Saviour, whereby your faith and other graces will grow by exercise also, you will come to be rooted and grounded in Christ, and you will find in a constant exercise of faith, innumerable advantages in your own experience to your soul's comfort.

6 Beware of being worldly minded, by seeking the things of a present world inordinately. They have their own shew as being substantial, whereas they are but as a shadow, appearing to be what they are not. I rather press this head because high and low, rich and poor, good and bad, have appeared to me to be far too much led away with a snary world, as if men could not be happy without it among their hands, whereas the Lord hath told us that man's life consists not in the abundance of what he possesseth. When you consider the Scriptures, you will nowhere find, "blessed are the rich," but you will

find blessedness ascribed to others, though they be not rich in this world, and you will see Jesus Christ and his apostles, despising the things of a present world, yet most blessed.

7 Set yourselves against all sins in heart, speech and behaviour, as not only dishonoring in the sight of God, but ruining to your own souls ; beware of heart sins especially, Jer. iv. 14, "*O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved: how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?*" the heart being the spring whence other sins flow whereby you may be defiled, Mat. xv. 19-20. "*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.*"—Of all sins set your selves against the sins you find you are most inclined

unto, and which most easily prevail over you, Psal. xviii. 23, “ *I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.*” Believe that nothing less than the operation of the holy Spirit will prevail to subdue the least of lusts in your souls, therefore pray much for the holy Spirit to work on your hearts, on the one hand to replenish your hearts with grace, and on the other hand to subdue sin in your hearts. Let this be your daily request, that the Lord may make your hearts sound in his statutes. That sin hardens, darkens, and indisposes the soul for the service of God though few are aware of it, and to this end hide God’s word in your hearts that you may not sin, Psal. cxix. 11, “ *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee,*” and shun ill company as much as possible Psal. xxvi. 4-5, “ *I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with*

dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.” Psal. cxix. 115, “*Depart from me ye evil doers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.*” Remember what ill company did to Solomon and to Peter.

8 Press much that the Lord may give you hearts to walk in love ever to live a life in love towards God in Christ. Read the Holy Scriptures, attend on Gospel ordinances, exercise love towards all men, and especially to the saints because they belong to God and Christ, and are partakers of his spirit and grace, for love is of God. It will evidence that you are born of and know him in a saving way. You will find in the ways of love greater pleasure of soul than I can tell you though I could enlarge on them. You cannot evade injuries from others even from the best of men; but love will lead you to pass them over, or not to

insist too much on them; knowing that you yourselves are not perfect, but that you offend others, and will need their forgiving you: Study to be in ease to pray the Lord's prayer:

9 In the hurry of the world as you are not to neglect prayers in secret; so allow time for family worship if the Lord give you families on earth. You will always have family sins to confess and seek the pardon of. You will always have family wants to petition for, and family mercies to bless the Lord for. Let your hearts and houses be temples for God in Christ to dwell in; as ever you would have heavenly mansions to be your everlasting habitations.

10 Seek hearts to design to live to the glory of God in your day, according to his word as your chief good from him. You have your being and preservation and all you have enjoyed, or can hope for in time or through eternity, and design to enjoy him, in going

about scriptural duties and ordinances on earth and through eternity ; pursue these great ends all your days in opposition to all corrupt ends which interfere with them, as many have no other ends than to satisfy the lust of the eye the lust of the flesh and the pride of life ; neither can they have a higher end in view who want a new heart and faith to overcome the world.

Now, my children, I commit you to the Lord, as your mother and I did before you were born ; together and alone and often since. If you seek the Lord and walk in his ways he will be found of you, and guide you with his counsel while you are here and afterwards receive you to glory ; but if you forsake him and his truths, he will forsake you.

As for me, having my breath, life, and all in dependance on the Lord, and not knowing what a day may bring forth, I do hereby own my adherence to the whole

covenanted reformation, the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline, as most agreeable to God's will in the Holy Scriptures. I often take the Lord's Supper adhering thereto. I could never see prelacy to be any other thing than a human invention brought into the church by the pride and worldly mindedness of some men, who by degrees aspired to be called patriarches, and so to be a Pope. I have wondered that many learned and good men in Britain and Ireland have been so long byassed by education and worldly honours and riches, that they have not as yet seen the great loss religion is at, by their continuing so long to support an hierarchy and ceremonies, which all who know history must see proceed from the apostate, heretical, and idolatrous Church of Rome, and were established before the reformation; I have desired that the Holy Ghost may dispose the hearts of good men of all ranks

in these lands unbyassedly to consider and fall upon measures proper to preserve the doctrine, and worship of God, the government and discipline most agreeable to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to purge out all doctrines which have deceived these hundred years past, contrary to the same. I cannot think that godly and learned men are not laying to heart the progress of heresy's and errors with a flood of wickedness flowing from them, so that the glorious God is highly provoked, and that it is the wonderful mercy of God that destroying judgments are not poured out long ago on these lands, and that the Holy God has not put a bill of divorce into our hands and forsaken us. It hath wounded my soul much and often, to consider how many churches in England and Ireland are supplied by men of no learning nor sense of the gospel truths they preach to people, and who are so far from the exercise of gospel holi-

ness, that their lives are verry immoral, to the great loss of their own souls and the souls which hear them ; the spring of which, is so far as I could discern, considering the matter as impartially as I was capable, pluralities of benefices given to many by great men, and these so favoured agree with men to supply churches for a small thing, who are utterly unworthy to bear the name of a Minister of Christ, wanting a due fund, so that they must live as they can in a way the most contrary to the gospel care of people's souls, to edification, or to studying and in a compliance with their sinful ways in their own practice. Alas, such priests, such people; from them flows the rtine of multitudes of souls, whereas if pluralities were discharged, and men of religion planted in every Church with due funds, and every one thus planted studying to approve himself to God, and to mind the directions given in the

Epistles to Timothy and Titus, how blessed would the churches be; the Lord would take pleasure to dwell among us; Satan's interest would fall, godliness would flourish, and men in the holy ministry would press for an union in truth and holiness in practice, who, alas, now stand at a greater distance than becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ, and give occasion to bad men to propagate pernicious principles which tend to subvert christianity in these lands, and to the Papists to entertain hopes of reducing all ranks to the idolatrous synagogue of Rome, some time or other. . How long, alas! shall alienation and contention continue to distract and destroy? and this only for upholding an earthly grandeur which the churches of Christ know nothing of, the first ages after the death of Christ, and which was established in these lands by the prevailing apostacy and tyrannie of the Romish church. Tho' men now carry matters

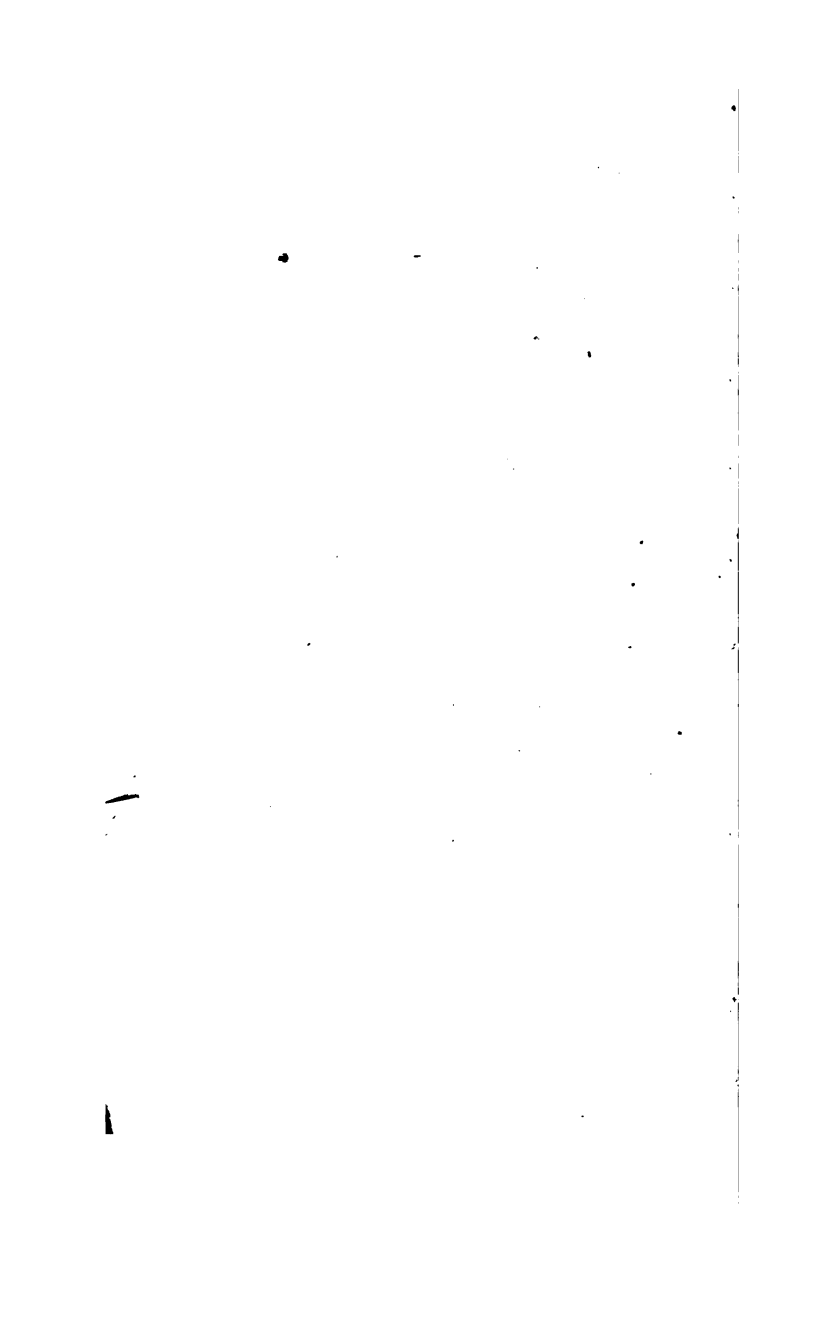
on with an high hand, to the ruin of many souls, yet when the Lord comes to judgment, things will appear with a most dismall aspect to all who have preferred things human and earthly to things spirituall and eternall, and were not in their day unhyassed ; and active to lay aside all selfish views, and press for scriptural reformation in their day in the churches.

Can any think that the Lord will not say to such, why did you not teach people to observe and do all things I commanded in order to my being with you always to the end of the world ? Will the answer satisfy the Lord Jesus at judgment, when men say ;—they did as others did before them, and as the custom of the church allowed, and laws of the land permitted. For several years they took the promise of their substitutes, to have care of the people's souls, and had their worldly interest increased by having such as they could find

most easily engaged to serve the care of such churches as they had interest in. Alas ! how frivolous will such reasons be before angels and men in the great day of judgement, when so many souls are lost by the ignorance, loose lives and unconscientiousness of their teachers, who undertook the charge only for a livelyhood, and it being small, behaved as they thought fit, as they could best serve their own views and the humours of people, though contrair to the gospel. The Lord put it in the hearts of church and state to consider and set about ways of reforming all abuses according to the gospel, before it be too late, to the glory of God, the preventing of soul-ruin, and their own eternal comfort. Amen.

JAMES MONTEITH.

Manse of Borgue, }
August, 1729. }



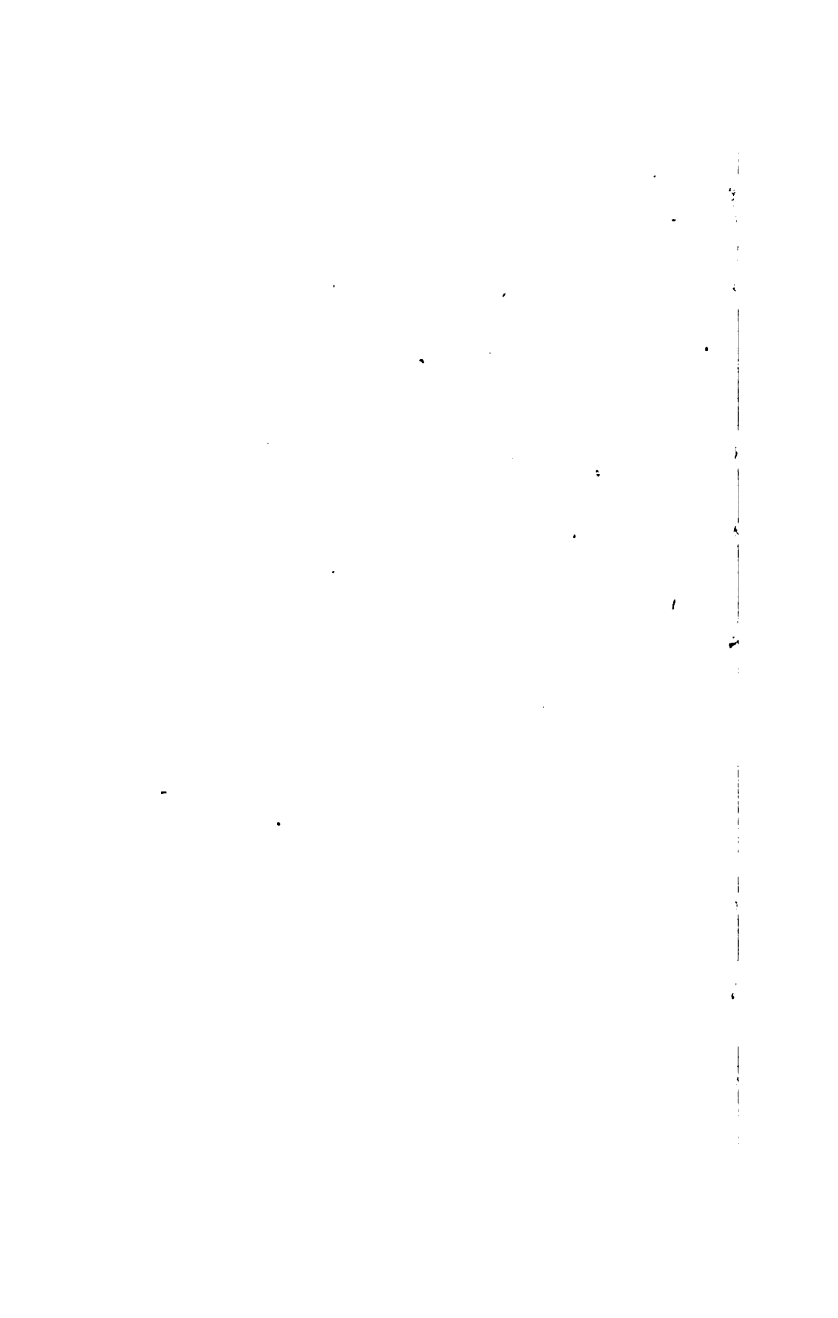
Note 1. page 7.

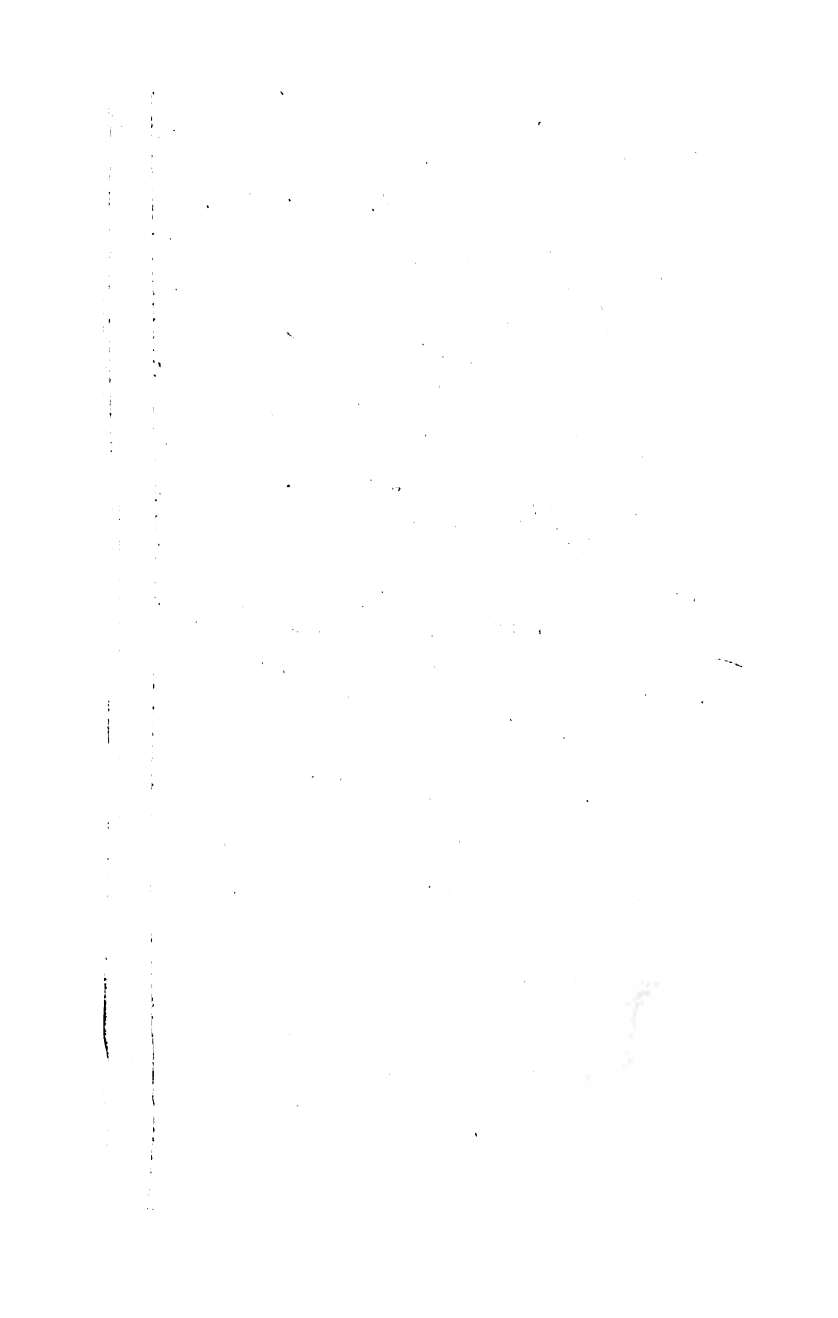
According to tradition handed down from father to son, it appears, that Mr Monteith was a native of Scotland, though a considerable part of his early life had been spent in Ireland. That he had served as an officer in King William's army, and was present in this capacity at the memorable siege of Derry in 1688, where the besieged were reduced to the greatest extremities for want of provisions, and were obliged to support nature in the most miserable manner. In the end they proved victorious after the siege had lasted one hundred and five days. Accordingly after this, if Mr Monteith at any time observed the country people in his parish to be less careful of provisions than, in his opinion, they ought to have been, it was his custom to rebuke them sharply, remarking, that if they had ever stood in the same need of sustenance as he had done, they would have learned to take better care of the Lord's mercies.

It appears evident from the state of Mr Monteith's family soon after he came to Borgue, that he had been sometime married before his settlement there.

Note 2. page 46.

As an instance of Mr Monteith's watchful care over the religious interests of his





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